

Message
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USAID/Philippines
Enhanced and Rapid Improvement of Community
Health (EnRICH):
"Barangay Community-Based Health
Organizations' Congress"
July 17, 2006, Garden Orchid Hotel,
Zamboanga City

Asalamu alaikum.

Warm greetings to all the participants from the national Department of Health (DOH), DOH-ARMM, the provincial health officials and staff of the five ARMM provinces and the City Health Office of Marawi; the local chief executives of the various municipalities and barangays of ARMM; and most especially to the representatives of the different community-based health organizations - the "Barangay Health and Nutrition Task Force" from Lanao del Sur and Marawi City, the Community Health Teams of Basilan, the Barangay Health Teams of Sulu

and the Healthy Families Coalitions of Tawitawi and Maguindanao. Congratulations to the EnRICH coalition composed of Helen Keller International, Christian Children's Fund, Save the Children and ACDI/VOCA, for successfully organizing this event.

USAID is very pleased to be part of this "Barangay Community-Based Health Organizations' Congress." This congress promises new hope to help improve health outcomes in the ARMM. After four years of technical assistance from the USAID/EnRICH program, the communities in the five ARMM provinces have shown that organized, dedicated and supportive local community-based health organizations composed of the various sectors at the barangay level, can be active partners of community health service delivery in the ARMM.

Each province has its own individual uniqueness. This is very true in the ARMM region. With this uniqueness comes the need for specific local approaches to help address the gaps in provision of health services for each area. This has been the successful strategy taken by the EnRICH project- one project, but with different approaches and methods for each community. EnRICH will end this year but the American people will continue to provide assistance to the ARMM's health sector through a new, integrated and more comprehensive five-year ARMM health project which is expected to begin implementation by October 2006. Through this new project, we hope to build on the initial successes by EnRICH and other USAID health programs.

Let us all support this endeavor and continue our work through partnership and collaboration among the national and local agencies, provincial health office, local governments, NGOs, the private sector, local communities and the international donor community to improve access and deliver high quality health services to the citizens of this region.

The U.S. Government is pleased to be part of this event and the American people are behind you in helping the region achieve its aspirations. We believe that programs to improve health, nutrition and family planning practices are particularly important to achieving peace and sustaining economic development.

I commend the regional and provincial health offices, for their partnership with NGOs such as these community-based health organizations and other groups whose work have made significant headway in improving the health situation in the ARMM. Together with the ARMM regional government under the leadership of Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan, the Department of Health, DOH-ARMM and the local government units, we can significantly help improve the health situation. The people of the ARMM deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your collaboration and congratulations on your efforts. We wish you the best for a successful congress.

Wasalaam.